Business and Industry banquet recognizes outstanding Muskogee employers

For more than 18 years the Business and Industry Banquet has recognized more than 100 businesses and individuals who have contributed to the quality of life and economic growth of Muskogee. Each fall, the Muskogee City-County Port Authority, Indian Capital Technology Center and the Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism partner to honor local business for their achievements over the past year. With nearly 200 in attendance, this year’s banquet featured keynote speaker Anthony James, General Manager for Packaging Corporation of America, and was emceed by Dan Morris, President and CEO of Advantage Controls.

Owens-Illinois (O-I) received the Business of the Year award for $50 million of investment replacing two glass furnaces and the installation of a new oxy fuel system designed to improve furnace efficiency and reduce overall emissions at the facility. O-I employs 220 employees and has operated in Muskogee since 1935 as Brockway Glass, joining the O-I family in 1988. O-I is one of Muskogee’s top ten largest employers and top three highest-paying employers for salary and benefits.

The Business Start-up award was presented to All-Steel Carports. Since opening in February 2015, $3 million has been invested in land, buildings and equipment, consisting of a new 30,000 square foot facility on 13 acres of land. All-Steel Carports currently has 20 employees.

The recipient of the New Product Development award was Acme Engineering and Manufacturing for the creation of a new agricultural exhaust fan. The DXP housing was created from an injection molded, corrosion resistant polymer designed to avoid variance with temperature changes. This polymer replaces the fiberglass housing and allows for reduced tolerance between it and the fan blades improving efficiency and performance. Acme Engineering employs 211 employees.

The large-employer Local Expansion award went to American Foundry for their investment in the construction of a new 15,000 square foot facility to house the inspection and testing lab which will increase quality control abilities. The company began in Muskogee as Green Country Castings Corporation in 1973. American Foundry Group acquired GCCC in 1986. American Foundry employs 165 employees.

The small-employer Local Expansion award was presented to Oklahoma Interpak for the construction of a 5,600 square foot addition to their manufacturing space. Oklahoma Interpak also focused on projects to increase plant capacity, customer service and employee communications as well as installing new machinery to decrease freight damage. Total investment in buildings and equipment exceeds $1 million. Oklahoma Interpak employs 30 employees.
Hughes Lumber Company is the recipient of the Sales Growth award. Hughes Lumber, a business in Muskogee since 1984, had an 80% increase in Sales Growth in 2014. Growth of this magnitude can be attributed to their experience and dedicated staff. Hughes Lumber employs 19 employees.

The Safety award, chosen by the ICTC Business and Industry Service’s Safety Coordinator, was presented to Advantage TerraFab. Advantage TerraFab is a locally-owned structural steel manufacturer and powder coating facility that employs the use of heavy industrial machinery and equipment. Last year with more than 30,000 man hours in production, Advantage TerraFab did not incur a single recordable incident. Advantage TerraFab established a safety program with regular in-service training and are in the final stages of AISC certification which includes a safety component. The emphasis on personal awareness and responsibility for one’s own safety and the safety of their co-workers seems to have had the greatest impact on safety. Advantage TerraFab employs 20 employees.

The Committee’s first-ever Healthy Workplace award was presented to Roughneck Supply for providing a free, fully-equipped gym for employees and their families to help promote healthy lifestyles and reduce stress in the workplace. The gym is open 24 hours a day and includes a wide range of equipment such as free weights, multiple cardiovascular machines, cable resistance stations and plate weighted equipment as well as private dressing and bathroom facilities. Roughneck also paid for the services of a certified personal trainer, physical therapist and nutritionist who are available work with employees and address their specific needs and concerns. Roughneck Supply employs 35 employees.

Acme Engineering and Manufacturing was presented the Committee’s first-ever Marketing Ad Campaign award for their Proud. Tough. AMERICAN ad. This ad is promoted to businesses across the U.S. and featured in the trade association annual publication, AMCA InMotion, which is included in the International American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers Journal and viewed by more than 100,000 readers worldwide. Acme Engineering employs 211 employees.

This year’s Marketing Website and Social Media Campaign award was presented to Advantage Controls for successfully increasing their online presence across various social media with dedicated postings to their Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn pages. With a dedicated social media coordinator added to their staff, Advantage Controls not only increased their social media presence, but also saw more employee and customer engagement and an increase in brand recognition. The company’s new verified Google Plus page has more than 24,000 views and has improved the accuracy of Internet browser search results. Advantage Controls has also added a library of how-to videos on their YouTube page for customers to access and learn at their convenience. Advantage Controls employs 120 employees.

Backwoods Food Manufacturing received the Customer Service award for their dedication to going above and beyond for its customers, regardless of the extra time and effort involved. Backwoods Foods regularly receives positive feedback from both store customers for their high quality products and manufacturing customers regarding their experiences working with the Backwoods team. Backwoods Foods employs 24 employees.

The Committee’s first-ever Tourism award was awarded to The Castle of Muskogee. 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of the Oklahoma Renaissance Festival and the Halloween Festival at the Castle. The Castle boasts more than 100,000 visitors each year for their different events and makes a large impact on Muskogee’s economy. The Castle prides themselves on being a gateway to another world and creating a new experience for everyone visiting. The Castle employs a permanent staff of 15, along with more than 200 cast members for various events.

The Committee also recognizes businesses that have been in operation in Muskogee for more than 100 years, through induction into Muskogee’s Century Club. Founded in 1913, Club Lunch has operated for
102 years from their current location in downtown Muskogee. They are currently undergoing renovations to make better use of their space and to increase their seating from 75 to 128.

The Port of Muskogee’s Established Industries Committee, who determines the award recipients each year, has been established for more than 25 years and is comprised of members from both the public and private sector, working together towards a common goal to create a better environment for local businesses.

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(Photos courtesy of the Muskogee Phoenix)

PHOTOS ALSO ATTACHED